REMARKS

In the Final Office Action mailed January 12, 2005, the claims were rejected because the canceled claims status was not a correct label and the cancelled claims contained text. The claims have been corrected to comply with 37 CFR 1.121(c).

Claims 1, 3-10, 12-21, and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's prior art in view of Bontemps et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,923,663).

Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

1.   The cited prior art does not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations.

Directing Examiner's attention to MPEP 2143.03, to establish prima facie obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. Claim 1 recites:

In a communications system having a router, said router having a PCI-compliant front card, said front card being configured to accept a LAN or WAN compliant back card, a method for detecting the absence of a Phy Layer device on the back card and communicating said absence to the front card, said method comprising:
  . receiving, by a switching input of a tri-state buffer provided on the front card, a sensing signal from the back card;
  if said sensing signal is a logical low, then coupling a IDSEL signal corresponding to a particular channel of said back card to said front card; and
  if said sensing signal is not low, then decoupling said IDSEL signal from said front card and providing a logical low signal in the place of said IDSEL line.

Remaining independent claims 10 and 18 in the present application contain similar limitations; Applicant's arguments presented below apply equally to claims 10 and 18 as they do to claim 1.

Examiner has cited Bontemps (US Patent 5,923,663) at column 11, lines 25-38 as

disclosing the limitation of if said sensing signal is a logical low, then coupling a IDSEL

signal corresponding to a particular channel of said back card to said front card.

However, Bontemps does not teach communication between a PCI-compliant front

card configured to accept a LAN or WAN complaint back card, thus utilizing

IDSEL signaling between the front card and back card. Bontemps at column 11, lines

25-38 reads:

When any LINK_DETECTx signal is asserted, the mode control circuit 222 latches the
corresponding XOVER_SELx signal, and disables the toggling function of the XOVER_
SELx signal for the port. If the LINK_DETECTx signal is subsequently negated, the
mode control circuit 222 returns the XOVER_ SELx signal to the toggle mode. In this
manner, for each PHY device 218, the mode select circuit 220 continuously toggles the
XOVER_ SELx signal to toggle connection of the RX contact pair 220a between the
contact pair 210a and the contact pair 210b until the corresponding LINK_DETECTx is
asserted. When the LINK_DETECTx is asserted, the mode select circuit 220 latches the
XOVER_ SELx signal to keep it in the same state in which the LINK_DETECTx was
asserted.

Bontemps' LINK_DETECT signal is not the equivalent of a IDSEL signal.

Examiner's attention is directed to AAPA page 4, line 15 – page 5, line 3, which reads:

By way of background, when a PCI-compliant device is coupled to a hot device, certain
procedures occur to ensure a proper connection. An important aspect of the PCI
standard is the identification of devices which have made themselves available to the
bus. When a device is present, it makes its presence known by responding to the hose
when its IDSEL input is driven high during a config cycle. During the config cycle, a
device is targeted by a combination of Command/byte enable signals (C/BE[3:1] = 101)
during the PCI address phase, and by making active the device's IDSEL input. All
devices on the PCI bus will look at their IDSEL inputs and will respond if the IDSEL
input is active.

Additional explanation is presented in page 5 of the AAPA of how the FE MAC on a

PCI-compliant front card is **permanently located on the front card.** This is what causes

the problem presented in Applicant's AAPA, and is not contemplated by Bontemps. In

fact, PCI-compliant front cards are not the same as anything disclosed, taught or

suggested by Bontemps. Bontemps doesn't even mention PCI (as discussed below with respect to lack of motivation to combine Bontemps with the AAPA), and thus Bontemps does not disclose claim 1 of the present application's limitation of *if said sensing signal is a logical low, then coupling a IDSEL signal corresponding to a particular channel of said back card to said front card.* It cannot be argued that Bontemps teaches a front card having a FE MAC, as FIG. 2 in Bontemps shows arrows leading from each PHY to an unillustrated MAC.

2.   There is no implicit disclosure of PCI-compliant front cards having MACS located thereon in Bontemps.

Examiner's attention is directed to MPEP 2144.01:

"In considering the disclosure of a reference, it is proper to take into account not only the specific teachings of the reference but also the inferences which one skilled in the art would reasonably be expected to draw therefrom."

If the Examiner maintains that Bontemps discloses an inference which one skilled in the art would reasonably be expected to draw that Bontemps can be extended to PCI-compliant front card having a MAC located thereon in any manner, Applicant demands evidence of such disclosure or suggestion.

3.   There is no motivation to combine Bontemps with Applicants Admitted Prior Art.

Bontemps does not teach any resolution of the problem described in AAPA because Bontemps does not recognize the problem described in AAPA. AAPA describes the problem that occurs when a FE MAC is located on the front card. In order to combine Bontemps with AAPA, the Examiner must show that Bontemps in combination with AAPA would arrive at Applicant's invention. Absent this, there is no motivation to
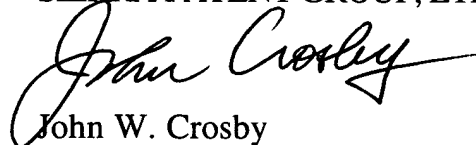
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combine Bontemps with AAPA because such combination doesn't solve the problem described in Applicant's AAPA.

In conclusion, Applicant respectfully submits that the 35 USC 103(a) rejection of claims 1, 10 and 18 (and thus their respective dependent claims) cannot be sustained. If the Examiner feels there are any remaining issues that can be resolved by telephone, Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the phone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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